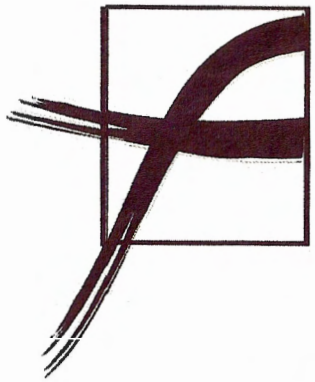

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Technologies of Mobility in the Americas

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Imaginative Technologies of (Im)mobility at the "End of the World"

Noel B. Salazar

During the southern hemisphere summer of 2009–2010, I was in Chile conducting research on transnational mobilities. The country had just been admitted as the first South American member of the OECD, the so-called "rich man's club" of nations and, capitalizing on this, the government was busy preparing its *Chile hace bien* ("Chile is good for you") campaign to promote Chile abroad. I was interested in the (dis)connections that Chileans make between becoming a "developed" country and (increased) transnational mobility. Interestingly, the people I talked to focused mostly on explaining why they personally wanted to stay put. Comments such as: "I wouldn't leave, in my case I'm rooted in my family and I'm not desperate to leave the country" were common. People also stated that "Chile is so far from everything." While many Chilean citizens do not have the financial means to travel, increased numbers of academic scholarships and overseas work placements are providing the opportunity to study or work abroad. Nevertheless, many Chileans stress that they are homebound and draw on a metaphor of their country as an inaccessible island, with both its positive quality of insulation and its negative characteristic of isolation, as justification (cf. Vannini, 2011). Much of this imaginary derives from the country's history. This chapter reports on what I discovered and suggests how it helps us to understand contemporary (im)mobilities in Chile and beyond.

This edited volume deals in particular with technologies of mobility. Here, technology is defined as any technique, system, or method of organization that serves a particular purpose (mostly related to human ability to control and adapt to varying environments). Technologies of (im)mobility, then, are utilized to control and adapt to various forms of sedentarism and movement. As the other contributions to this book richly illustrate, technologies of mobility encompass a wide range of practices and procedures. I argue in this chapter that, apart from "spatial, infrastructural and institutional moorings" (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006, p. 3), there is another type of technology that configures and enables or constrains boundary-crossing mobilities. The technology I am disentangling here may be less visible than other categories, but is certainly as important (Brann, 1991; Strauss, 2006). Historically laden imaginaries—culturally shared and socially transmitted representational assemblages that are

used as meaning-making devices—are the "energetic source" (Baeza, 2008, p. 24) that inspires social life, including people's (im)mobilities (Salazar, 2010a, 2010b). Imaginaries of mobility, or "representations of movement that give it shared meaning" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 19), form an important part of the ideas, beliefs, or habits to which people are accustomed and from which they gain security or stability in both their daily activities and the long-term planning of their lives.

Imaginative technologies, cultural mechanisms enacted through socially shared imaginaries, create subjectivities which are used by individuals as personal resources for the construction and management of their identities and activities. People worldwide rely on unspoken, powerful images and ideas, from the most spectacular fantasies to the most mundane reveries, to shape multiple, often conflicting, identifications of Self and Other. Imaginaries of the world (including the Other) and of oneself, as individual or as part of society, always go hand in hand (Castoriadis, 1987). These constructions, whether descriptive or normative, may maintain a subtle distribution of power and privilege, which may not be obvious to the people who have internalized them (Jónsson, 2011). While social imaginaries are part of the glue that holds groups together (Taylor, 2004), one of the central problems is the lack of correspondence between the projected ideals and aspirations on the one hand, and the perceived and experienced reality on the other. No wonder utopias are one of the common expressions of the social imaginary. These are critical visions of good and possibly attainable social systems and lives, either spatial (located elsewhere) or temporal (located in another time).

Boundary-crossing mobilities, too, involve how people form relations with others and how they make sense of this (Adey, 2006). Their meaning and experience is always tied to certain dominant, sociocultural values and expectations. People hardly journey to *terrae incognitae*, but to destinations they already virtually "know" through the widely circulating imaginaries about them. Such imaginaries travel through a multitude of channels and provide the cultural material to be drawn upon and used for the creation of translocal connections. Empowered by mass-mediated images and discourses, these culturally inflected imaginaries have changed the way in which people collectively envision the world and their own position and mobilities within it (Salazar, 2010a). Imaginaries of mobility play a constitutive role in social structuration and can be seen as pervading "constellations of mobility," which Cresswell defined as "historically and geographically specific formations of movements, narratives about mobility and mobile practices" (2010, p. 17). These constellations are "multi-faceted, diverse, never subject to simple characterizations" (Vannini, 2011, p. 267).

This chapter develops Cresswell's approach to take "both historical mobilities and forms of immobility seriously" (2010, p. 17). Using Chile as a case study, I explore how the dominant imaginaries circulating about this country, both inside and outside its borders, are "foreign." Their cyclical repetition throughout Chile's history shows their effectiveness as technologies of (im)mobility. Fieldwork was conducted in Chile between December 2009 and January 2010. Methods included archival research, observation (direct or participant) and free-flowing interviews with key informants and other significant actors in the field of transnational mobility (mainly migration and tourism). Ancillary data included audio-visual material, news media, documents, and websites. Findings were recorded in personal research diaries. In this chapter, I sketch the historical genealogy of imaginaries about Chile, many of which are utopian in nature, and then focus on how old imaginaries of Chile as "the end of the world" impact on how contemporary Chileans participate in, and frame their perceived exclusion from, a plethora of new mobilities, regardless of whether they have the means and freedom to cross (imaginary and real) boundaries.

The End of the World (as People Know It)

It is a bright Saturday morning and I am in downtown Santiago, Chile's bustling capital. While I await the arrival of one of my informants, I have time to observe the surroundings. It is hard to ignore the multiple markers showcasing the city's global interconnectedness: global brand name stores and restaurant chains, advertisements for European and North American movies, the occasional foreign face in the crowd, and Chileans on cell phones referring to faraway worlds. This observation stands in marked contrast with a nationwide research study conducted by the United Nations Development Program which revealed that 38% of young people in Chile are not receptive to "foreignness" and have never considered living abroad (PNUD, 2003, pp. 13–14). Such attitudes are particularly pronounced amongst girls and people belonging to the middle or lower social classes, while boys from middle and higher classes tend to hold opposing views and are much more receptive to foreign influences (PNUD, 2003, pp. 14–15). Young people living in the capital were found to display the most cosmopolitan attitudes.

My informant is a young history student from a wealthy Chilean family. After only a few minutes' discussion, it becomes clear that Juan (pseudonym) holds serious reservations about transnational mobility. He has many opportunities to travel abroad but never makes concrete plans. He likes to fantasize about the possibility, but seems afraid to realize a border-crossing trip (and to

leave the safety of "the island"). Such mobility-related anxieties have been documented elsewhere, too (Lindquist, 2009). Apart from mentioning strong family bonds, another reason Juan gives me is that he is afraid that "seeing Chile from the outside can be a disenchanting experience" (referring to the fact that there is a danger of not recognizing one's own lifeworld or "different-because-remote" frame of reference anymore if one stays abroad for too long). Even if he acknowledges how valuable an experience travelling abroad can be, out of compliance, Juan, in common with many of my other research participants, prefers to stay in Chile. When I ask Juan why so few Chileans want to study or work abroad, he suggests to me that having a closer look at the country's history may help to understand contemporary Chilean society's attitude towards transnational mobilities.

Chile is a 4,300 km long and narrow strip of land (on average 175 km wide) between the Andes Mountains in the east and the Pacific Ocean in the west, the Atacama Desert in the north and the icebergs of Patagonia in the south. This "crazy geography" (Benjamín Subercaseaux, 1973) has not only determined its territorial boundaries, but also influenced the imaginaries both natives and foreigners alike have about the country. Prior to the arrival of Spanish colonizers in the sixteenth century, northern Chile was under Inca rule and various groups of Araucanian Indians inhabited the central lands and southern islands. The origin of the word *Chile* is contested. One possible linguistic genealogy is the Aymara concept *chilli* ("where the world ends"). For the Aymara, a native ethnic group living in the Andes and the Altiplano, it made sense to denote the lands southwest of theirs as the end of their lifeworld. The Spanish had done the same at home, calling the westernmost point of the Iberian Peninsula Cabo Fisterra (Cape Finisterre). However, these geographical imaginaries drastically changed when Iberians discovered, in the fifteenth century, that, far beyond their western "edge of the world," there was another land: America. From that moment onwards, the so-called New World became one of the favorite places onto which Europeans projected their wildest images and ideas of paradise on earth and where many of the old continent's failed utopias could materialize.

Most cultures and religions have myths depicting an imaginary existence different from the hardships of real life, an existence blessed with nature's bounty, untroubled by strife or want. This happy state is nearly always placed somewhere or sometime outside normal human experience, often "off the map" in some remote quarter of the world. Such ideas from the Old Testament and ancient Greco-Roman and Celtic myths played an important role in providing some of the explorers and early settlers in the New World with a framework to understand, explain, and justify their activities (Aínsa, 1999; Baritz, 1961). In the words of Lévi-Strauss, "when they moved into unknown regions they were more anxious to verify the ancient history of the Old World than to discover a new one" (1955/1961, p. 78). As the discoverers of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries came to venture to the edges of the world, it was supposed that, sooner or later, they would encounter some of the mythical geographical utopias and figures whose existence was, at least for a great number of them, beyond dispute.

In the age of the discoveries, the whole of the Americas fulfilled the legendary role of the "end of the world." Yet, the utopian America that had to be was systematically crushed under the real one. With the way the conquests went, North and Central America gradually lost their mythical qualities and the European imaginary of the end of the world moved from the "Far West" to the "Far South" (Franz, 2000). As Stuven wrote, "for the Spanish Empire, Chile was one of the least important colonies; it was extremely far from the centers of power and it was a region of intermittent warfare. Who wanted to go to Chile? Very few. And this inevitably influenced and still influences the Chilean character" (2007, p. 47).[1] Stuven, a Chilean historian, gave a good example of the long-lasting influence of deep-rooted foreign imaginaries. Chile was, indeed, a poor colony; the colonizers never found the extensive gold and silver they had anticipated (partially based on the legends of King Solomon's mines and El Dorado). On the contrary, the conquest of Chile probably cost Spain more blood and treasure than all the rest of America. Interestingly, Chile also became one of Europe's ultimate utopian playgrounds, both in fiction (for writers and armchair adventurers) and in reality. Many wrote convincingly about Chile without ever having been there themselves (see Roa & Teillier, 1994).

By calling Chile "a fertile province" in his poem *La Araucana* (1589), the Spanish soldier, Alonso de Ercilla, gave rise to the myth of Chilean exceptionalism. Although Ercilla himself was barely a year and a half in Chile, his epic poem that sang the Spanish Empire of Philip II, already sensed Chile as a nation. No wonder Pablo Neruda, whose own writings were inspired by the work of Ercilla, called the latter the "inventor of Chile." The ways in which such discursive technologies play a constitutive role in social structuration has been well documented (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). The social-historical imaginaries of Chile as an extraordinary country, be it for its natural beauty, its political achievements, its culture, its military victories, its resilience in time of adversity, and numerous other qualities, have deeply influenced intellectuals and artists alike (cf. Stuven, 2007, p. 55).

Once independent, liberal Chilean politicians fought the colonial stigma that defined their country as the poorest and most miserable region of the New World, turning this imaginary around by means of discourses of geographical uniqueness to make Chile a "happy copy of Eden" (as evoked in the national

anthem and recycled in popular culture elements). They used a related set of discursive technologies to redefine the country in the political sphere as the antithesis of South American reality, thanks to the institutional stability of the ruling elites. This is a nice example of what Cresswell (2010, p. 21) referred to as "politics of representation," which impact on the experience of (im)mobilities. While the name of Chile in the colonial era had been associated with loss, isolation, violence, and insecurity, after independence it represented not only the republican ideal, but also stability and order (Sagredo Baeza, 2006). In other words, the natural condition and the geographic location of Chile conditioned not only its colonial image and development, but also its organization as a Republic. In 1830, the French naturalist, Claude Gay, was contracted to travel throughout Chile for three and a half years, investigating everything from geography and geology to demographics and industry. His monumental *Atlas de la historia física y política de Chile* (published in 30 volumes between 1844 and 1871) not only mapped out the country's political and natural past, but also greatly contributed to the Chilean cultural identity (Mizón, 2001).

Many of the foreign descriptions of Chile after the country had become independent refer to the extreme south, for the simple reason that, before the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, the Strait of Magellan was the main route for steam ships travelling from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific (Canihuante, 2006, p. 86). The ruling elite used this focus on the "cold," southern part to distinguish the country from its Latin American neighbors. Following the lines of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European discourses linking climate to racial development, Chilean authors insisted upon the tropical character of neighboring countries in contrast with the (European-like) temperate climes of Chile. This kind of thinking was backed up by the argument that the word *Chile* actually goes back to the Quechua word *chiri* ("cold") or the Aymara word *ch'iwi* ("shadow"), which is, coincidentally, pronounced the same as the English *chilly* (Pérez de Arce, 2006, p. 19).

A Short History of Migratory Mobilities

What are the (dis)connections between imaginaries, such as the ones described above, and people's mobilities? The history of transnational mobility in Chile starts with the Spanish conquistadors. Although they were among the first international immigrants that arrived in the country, they are not often recognized and named as such (Cano & Soffia, 2009). While colonizers also carry with them the flag of their country of origin to try to impose it on foreign territory, migrants mostly seek utopia in supposedly ideal places (the imagined

Promised Land), escaping from realities of submission and misery, if not persecution, that push them to leave their native place without titles or belongings (Aínsa, 1999). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Chile received many Spanish migrants, mainly from Extremadura and Castile and León, together with a small group of slaves of African descent. In the eighteenth century, people from Basque Country arrived, together with British and French traders. Most scholars, however, only started using the concept of migration when Chile gained independence and welcomed European soldiers and maritime traders, particularly English, French, and Italian people (but also Dutch, Greek, Portuguese, and Scandinavian), which in turn facilitated the spontaneous arrival of other Europeans. Many European governments sponsored migration to Chile.

The waves of immigrants who left Europe between 1850 and 1914 helped to reinvigorate the foundational spirit of the Promised Land; Latin America was seen to be the space and time of utopia. Nevertheless, Chile developed as a socially and culturally insular country unaccustomed to the presence of large numbers of foreigners. The early Chilean governments had two main motives for attracting European migrants: the colonization of the south of the country (finishing the task that the Spanish colonizers had begun), and the widespread belief that the Europeans, as hard workers, would foster economic development and modernization. Although the overall number of immigrants during this early period was relatively small, their presence transformed the country technologically, economically, religiously, and culturally. Already in 1824, the government enacted a law to encourage Europeans (primarily Swiss, German, and English) to establish factories in urban centers as well as to populate sparsely inhabited southern areas.

The first admission of immigrants to Chile was selective. In 1845, an immigration law ("Ley de Colonización") prescribed how the migration process was to unfold (Zavala San Martín & Rojas Venegas, 2005). The 1854 census shows approximately 20,000 foreigners, most of them German colonists in the Region of the Lakes (predominantly village artisans and agriculturalists). Their settlements in the south of Chile are a good example of how agricultural colonies were formed that transpose religions, customs, and architecture. As Baeza (2008) noted, "when these settlers wrote to their loved ones who had remained in Germany, they often evoked the illusion of a promised land, relying on a pan-Germanic ideal in which southern Chile was merely inserted as an extension of the Black Forest that, of course, the weather conditions and southern flora made them recall with nostalgia" (p. 265). In 1882, the immigration effort was reinforced through the establishment of the country's *Agencia General de Colonización* (General Immigration Agency) in European ports, offering Chilean land in uncultivated areas to settler families. Despite these efforts, relative-

ly few immigrants actually came—between 1889 and 1907, for instance, only 55,000 arrived, while Argentina in the same period received well over two million. Those who did arrive increasingly came on their own account, and not, as occasionally in the past, as part of government-sponsored immigration schemes.

The years between the 1907 and 1952 censuses are notable for the growth of immigrant populations of Arabs (fleeing conflicts in the Ottoman Empire, which then included Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon) and Asians. This migration was largely undocumented. Because these migrants were not White, they were not welcomed as warmly as their European predecessors, as they were considered to be both culturally inferior and an economic threat to the country (see Collier & Sater, 2004; Doña & Levinson, 2004).

The industrialization of the 1940s and the end of World War II prompted Chile to look for specific types of migrants. The 1952 migration law is very explicit about which kind of migrants were needed to contribute to the country's new economy. Internally, the country went through a rapid succession of divergent political ideologies in the second half of the twentieth century. From 1964 to 1970, there was a "revolution in liberty" (a social-Christian utopia) under Eduardo Frei; from 1970 a "Chilean road to socialism" (a Marxist utopia) under Salvador Allende; and from 1973 to 1989 a "silent revolution" (a neo-liberal, capitalist utopia) under dictator, Augusto Pinochet. The decree-law of 1975 detailed four desired groups of foreigners: students, tourists, workers, and residents. Paradoxically, this type of policy served to both diversify the foreigners in Chile and to restrict access for political and ideological reasons. More importantly, the dramatic political changes turned Chile from an immigrant to an emigrant nation (Martínez Pizarro, 2003). Pinochet's new social, political, and economic order undoubtably discouraged many potential immigrants. It is estimated that during the period 1973–1985 between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Chileans left their country, either voluntarily or compulsorily (Jedlicki, 2001). At the same time, the military dictatorship used the argument of distance to dismiss all foreign criticism: one should not listen to what is being said about Chile abroad; nobody understands us because we are different (Pizarro, 2003, p. 106).

Chile, a "Cool" Place

After having endured a difficult, 17-year dictatorial period (1973–1990), the military regime had isolated Chile from the world (and, thus, from transnational migrants and tourists). The only sector of Chilean society that was successful in creating a positive image abroad was the business sector, which could

boast the successes of the "Chilean miracle" (having turned Chile into one of the most prosperous nations of South America). The way in which the Chilean state took it upon itself, after the return to democracy, to "reinsert" Chile into the international community was partly influenced by the rising migration from within South America, the majority of immigrants (around 60%) coming from neighboring countries, especially from Peru and Argentina. This led to a return to the older claims of exceptionalism, namely Chile's non-tropical status.

Probably the most emblematic example of this strategy was the enormous chunk of iceberg that was towed from the Antarctic sea to the 1992 World Fair in Seville, Spain, to serve as the ultimate proof of Chile's lack of *tropicalismo* (cf. Dorfman, 1999). The iceberg was apparently intended to evoke associations of Chile as a cold place that shared not only a climate but also cultural and economic qualities with Northern Europe (Staab & Maher, 2006, p. 105).

The iceberg formed part of a broad campaign of nation-branding to improve the international image of Chile after the dictatorship (Fermandois, 2005, pp. 425–491). This campaign promoted the Chile that the country itself aspired to be: "cool," sober, technically advanced, and efficient—in other words, profoundly modern and, thus, more closely related to England ("the English of the Pacific") or the United States ("the Yankees of South America") than to Bolivia or Brazil (Subercaseaux, 1996). While in the West icebergs are rather associated with wilderness, for Chileans they symbolize a country that "started to jump on the train [of modernity], eager for closer contact with the developed world....The culture of Chilean 'cosmo' began—the aware and travelled Chilean—which was first advanced by the returnees but, over the years, took off on its own" (Contardo, 2008, p. 272).

Advertising, image building, and branding (all modern imaginative technologies) have penetrated all sectors of society, and the state has been one of the first institutions to adapt to this new logic, by becoming the main promoter of Chilean modernity. An important player in this respect is ProChile. This Trade Commission of Chile, responsible for implementing and enhancing Chile's trade policy abroad, was founded in 1974 (the start of the dictatorship) and belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Interestingly, one of the first things ProChile did was support the project, *Imagen País* (Country Image). This program, developed by a committee of the government agency for economic development (CORFO) to further develop the image of Chile's role as a member of the globalized world, first focused on the USA, but afterwards broadened its scope to include Europe (specifically Spain and the UK).

Figure 1. Imaginaries of (im)mobility: The old "reflected" in the new... (Photo: Noel B. Salazar)

Since 2000, the tone and content of ProChile's campaigns have changed considerably. Instead of the triumphalist discourse of modernity and regional exceptionalism, they have increasingly stressed the Latin American character of Chile, focusing on themes such as solidarity and concern for the welfare of the region. This change seems to be the result of pressures from the political Left, which resisted the monolithic approach to Chilean society (exclusively White and Western) of the previous campaigns, as well as of negative reactions from neighboring countries such as Bolivia (Peña, 2003). In 2005, the Imagen País campaign launched the slogan *Chile sorprende, siempre* ("Chile, always surprising"). This catchphrase was used until 2008, when the Fundación Imagen de Chile was created, a new institutional framework designed to provide general coordination of all activities involving Chile's image, both at home and abroad. The foundation's most recent international campaign, launched in September 2010, and entitled *Chile hace bien* ("Chile is good for you"), confirms many of the issues discussed in this chapter.

Contemporary (Im)mobilities

Apart from various migratory movements, rapid developments in the mobility-enhancing technologies of transport and communication have made Chile much more connected to the world than it used to be. In other words, "modernity no longer allows using one's geographical condition as an excuse. Chile is in constant contact with the world" (Stuven, 2007, p. 47). As some argue, "Chile keeps on being an isolated country, but it has been globalizing through communications and, in this sense, the isolation of Chile has become less dramatic, but it keeps on being a relative reality. The isolation expresses itself in that, in general, all references are made towards Chile, inwards" (Duhart, cited in Stuven, 2007, p. 49). Critical observers have noted that others are less homebound than Chileans (Pérez de Arce, 2006, p. 17), or have argued that Chile needs even more outside influence (Gonzalo Rojas, cited in Stuven, 2007, p. 56).

Take the example of Isabel, a young, middle class woman living in a small Chilean coastal town. She frames it as follows: "I have always believed that I won't stay in Chile my entire life. I have thought about living abroad in the near future, but I've never really planned anything.... We Chileans live the life of isolated islanders, don't we?" If Chileans think of their country as an island, it is not only because of Chile's perceived isolation. As Vannini pointed out, another hallmark of islandness is the positive characteristic of insulation, comprising "feelings of protection, safety, distinction, and disconnection" (2011, p. 257). Isabel, for instance, mentions stories she heard from Chileans about being discriminated against in countries like Spain, and comments that she would find it difficult to leave her family behind, being very "attached to the family" ("apegado a la familia"). The latter is something I heard over and over again when talking to Chileans across the country.

From a sedentarist perspective, of course, the absence of geographical mobility is the norm and the ideal. Malkki (1992) showed how the entrenchment of a sedentary worldview naturalizes the link between territory and identity, and in turn, pathologizes territorial displacement. How we interpret this depends on the analytical lens that we use:

> A functionalist perspective would focus on the role of immobility in reproducing the social structure. In a conflict perspective, immobility is a result of the impositions of people or institutions with the power to determine who gets to go and who gets to stay. These divergent understandings might be applied emically—that is, by the people themselves who are defining, imposing, and/or experiencing immobility. (Jónsson, 2011, p. 8)

An analysis that draws on both these perspectives is most enlightening. In the case of Chile, most people I interviewed rely on a conflict view to explain their transnational immobility, while this chapter clearly demonstrates that old imaginaries of (im)mobility play their functional role in keeping people in place and, thus, maintain the status quo in the field of social mobility (see Torche, 2005). Vigh (2009), therefore, proposed "social navigation" as an analytical concept that grants us this double perspective on practice and the intersection between agency, social forces, and change.

It is not all that surprising that Chileans think the way they do, given the long history of images that depict their country as an isolated paradise on earth. Aínsa's description of the Golden Age, where immobility was conceived of as a guarantee of paradise, is enlightening:

> It was simply a matter of being born and dying within the narrow limits of one's own shores, of being satisfied throughout one's life with the products of one's native soil and, above all, of not knowing about or having the curiosity to know about what was outside the precincts of daily life. The felicity of the Golden Age was guaranteed by isolation and self-sufficiency but also by that lack of curiosity toward what might exist beyond the limits of one's own immediate world. The rationalization is simple. If primary needs were satisfied on one's own shore there was no reason to look for new worlds outside the native plot of ground. (1986, p. 28)

The difference nowadays is that Chileans do not need to travel abroad to know what is going on outside their country. If they do not go out and explore the world, the world comes to them, in the form of foreigners (be they migrants or visitors) and global media. According to my informants, Chileans generally look up to foreigners, although they remain selective in which groups they welcome.

As mentioned earlier, Chilean emigration from the end of the 1960s until the beginning of the 1990s was primarily political. In the 1980s, this group of political migrants was expanded by the arrival of postgraduate students (brain drain) and economic migrants from the middle classes (which were quickly becoming poorer). In the 1990s and later, when larger groups of economic migrants left the country, their establishment abroad was facilitated by the communities of Chileans who had preceded them (Yépez del Castillo & Herrera, 2007). Since the 1990s, the percentages of Chileans travelling abroad and the influx of foreigners into the country have dramatically increased. Chileans temporarily leave the country to study, work, or simply travel abroad, being convinced that, in the words of one girl, "travelling opens your eyes and enables you to look at things from a more global perspective." However, "when Chileans travel, they do not particularly strive to know; Chileans arrive abroad and start contacting other Chileans" (Montt, cited in Stuven, 2007, p. 58). In summary,

> the self-referential word is typically Chilean. It does much good for Chileans to leave, but they are afraid of doing so. Not of physically leaving, but of leaving their environment, their frame of reference. The independent type or drifter is very little Chilean. (Duhart, cited in Stuven, 2007, p. 55)

Chileans in exile and returnees play an important role in all of this. They helped many Chileans to get rid of the provincialism they were bound to by trivializing the idea of traveling abroad and by showing that the geographical boundedness can be overcome by technical and economic means. As Contardo stated, "the nouveau riches in Chile, who began to emerge after two decades of sustained economic growth, unveiled a nascent cosmopolitanism that served as a social climbing tool for a small but vocal segment of the population" (2008, p. 272), thus reinforcing the latter argument. Travel became one of the elements relatively easy to access for that segment of the population just below the Chilean upper class. For this class of people the model is not the Chilean *cuico* (the upper class), but the global high society that travels, uses the latest electronic gadgets, eats out in restaurants, and knows about wines. Chileans both inside and outside the country are of the opinion that most career-builders look up to the USA, while Europe sounds "chic" (but is a second option or an ideological first choice). In 2009, for example, 30% of Chileans with a doctoral scholarship went to study in the USA, 18% in Spain, and 17% in the UK (Becas Chile, personal communication).

Holiday-wise, many travel within Chile as it is generally believed that "we have everything in Chile, except tropical beaches" (interview with Solange Fuster, Regional Director of Sernatur). If they have the means to travel outside the country, young Chileans go for the beach or carnival holidays to Brazil, the Caribbean (Dominican Republic), and Mexico (Cancún). Families with children go to Miami, couples travel on round trips to Europe (always including Spain), and the elderly go on international cruises. Those with lesser means go to neighboring Argentina or Peru. Faraway destinations such as China, Canada, and New Zealand are increasingly in demand (Vega, 2011). The newest trend (for those who can afford it) is adventure tourism to the Amazonian rainforest, India, or the Middle East.

Interestingly, one regularly hears arguments against migration. First of all, since Chile is doing relatively well economically within the wider Latin American context, potential migrants are looking beyond the continent's borders. In other words, there is nowadays little incentive to migrate and those wishing to do so need substantial financial resources. Second, although Chile portrays

itself as cosmopolitan, in reality the knowledge of foreign languages is very limited (see http://www.trabajando.cl/noticia.cfm?noticiaid=9432). This, in turn, limits migration opportunities. Third, after 9-11 it has become hard to obtain visas and other official migration documents (Cunningham & Heyman, 2004). While these are technical barriers to emigration, there is also a mental barrier: the idea that everything is very far (and consequently expensive, although Chilean people got used to credit). Of course, in the recent past the situation was different. For instance, there were about one million Chileans in (mainly south) Argentina, but many returned back home when Argentina itself was hit by an economic crisis at the turn of the millennium. Nowadays, Chileans travel to Mendoza and Buenos Aires to shop and to show off that Chile is in a better economic condition, and that the Chileans are no longer the *chilenitos* of before.

Conclusion

Culture lies at "the intersection of social experiences and collective imaginaries" (Palet & Velasco, 2002, p. 36). The findings described in this chapter illustrate how imaginative technologies of (im)mobility emerge as sources constitutive of cultural meanings beyond being a mere extension or transfer of them (Salazar, 2010c). Imaginaries are signified and resignified, indicating both socio-cultural continuities and rupture. In the words of Baeza, "social imaginaries are never definitive and, for this reason, the construction of today's reality, for sure, is not the same as the one we will have tomorrow" (2008, p. 288). This applies very well to the representations and practices of (im)mobility. Even when a person is place-bound, his or her imagination can be in movement, travelling to other places and other times. By extension, it can be argued that even when one is in movement, one's imagination can be focused on a singular place (e.g., people in the diaspora re-creating their imagined homeland), and that these imaginaries of fixity can influence one's experience of mobility. How people experience and make sense of transnational (im)mobilities relates to "a greater socio-cultural matrix of values and expectations" (Jónsson, 2011, p. 4). Analyses of mobility are thus best combined with complementary studies of the various "moorings" that promote and constrain it (Hannam et al., 2006). Studying and questioning culture-specific imaginaries of (im)mobility offers us a novel way of grasping the ongoing, global transformations of the human condition (Salazar & Smart, 2011).

The Chilean case nicely shows how constellations from the past can break through into the present in surprising ways. The representational assemblages I discussed above entail particular politics of mobility, "social relations that involve the production and distribution of power" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 21). Jónsson rightly reminded us that "certain forms of immobility may be socially constructed, although they appear as natural, normal and even desirable" (2011, p. 10). The historical continuities of (im)mobilities in Chile are a cultural phenomenon. The constant recycling of old (foreign) imaginaries—a play upon the nostalgic longing for rootedness—serves as a kind of protection. These imaginaries turn out to be a very effective technology of (im)mobility, in the sense that they are used, by citizens and authorities alike, to control and adapt to emerging forms of transnational mobility. As Brubaker argued, "the politics of belonging are generated not by the movement of people across borders, or by the movement of borders across people, but by the *absence* of movement or mobility—in social space, not geographical space" (2010, p. 70). While with the story of the iceberg Chile wanted to show how it could move the unmovable, this chapter illustrates another reality of those who can move but are kept at a standstill by imaginative technologies of (im)mobility.

As Vannini stated, "mobility is *not* inherently desirable" (2011, p. 249). Indeed, the meaning and value attributed to (im)mobility is largely socio-cultural. This particular case study illustrates that mobility is not necessarily part of the core of the social imaginary, geopolitics, and cultural life of all of the Americas. The culture of (im)mobility is specific to the region where it is represented and practiced (e.g., Cohen, 2004) and to the specific time period (e.g., Fumerton, 2006). Even if scholars have long since critiqued root-based world views and primordial linkages between people and place (Clifford, 1997; Malkki, 1992), the dominant discourse in Chile keeps on stressing that not being (transnationally) on the move is the quintessential characteristic of what it means to be a true Chilean. Chile keeps thriving on a culture of immobility rather than on one of mobility (at least at the transnational level). The Cordillera and other physical boundaries serve as real barriers for those who stay, and as imaginative horizons for the few who do choose to leave. Immobility persists, as a culturally ingrained and culturally sanctioned response to a rapidly changing world. However, this may only be temporary and not a permanent answer. I concur with Greenblatt et al., who said that "even in places that at first glance are characterized more by homogeneity and stasis than by pluralism and change, cultural circuits facilitating motion are at work" (2009, p. 5). In a global context in which geographical mobility becomes almost normative for any form of achievement, be it economic, academic, or personal, it will become harder and harder to keep Chileans from navigating across boundaries.

Notes

1. All translations in this chapter are my own.

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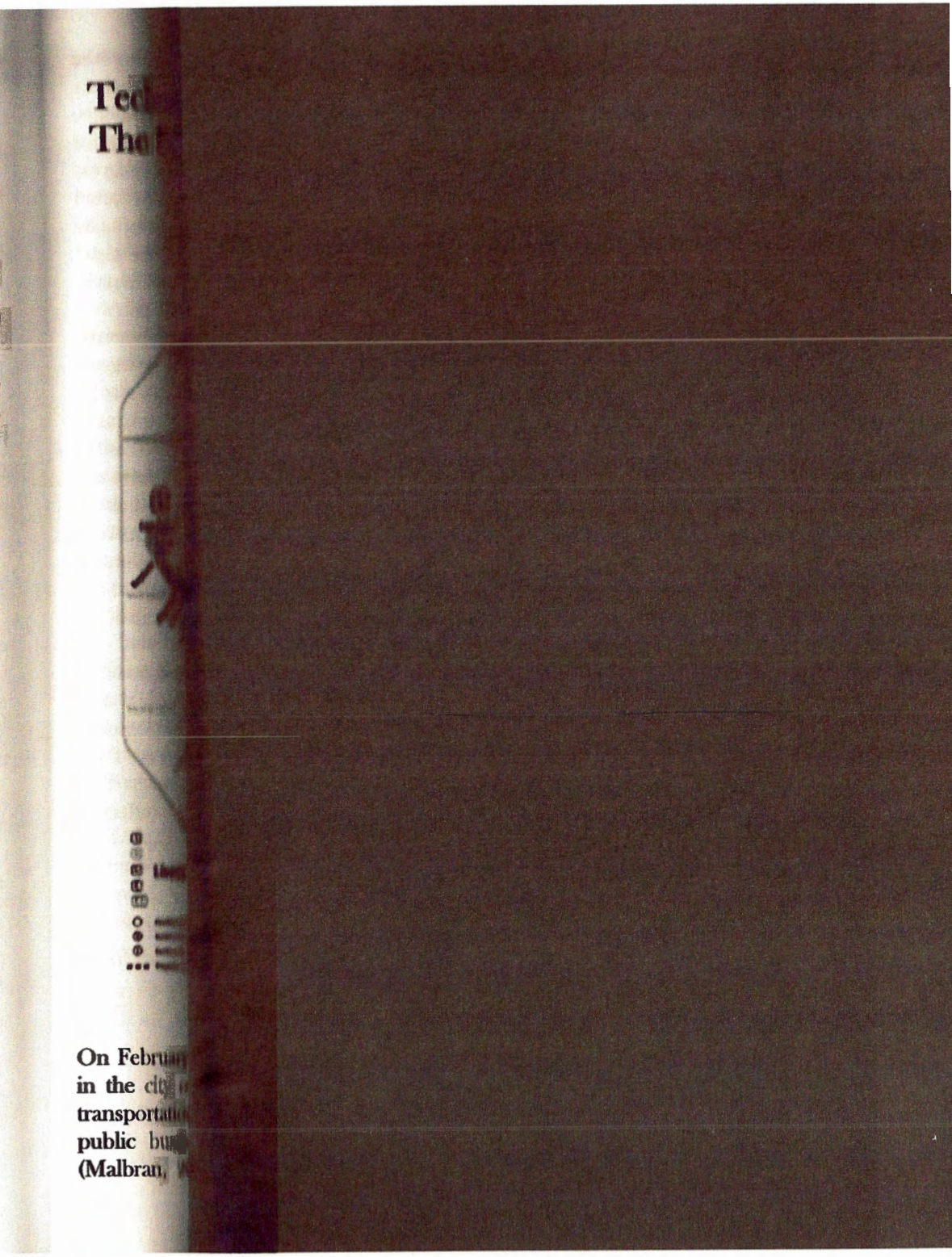

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